14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

122

FOREWORD

Dr. Charles Brant was associated from 1948 to 1951 with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Cornell University, from which he received his degree in cultural anthropology with special emphasis on the cultures of Southeast Asia. The University in 1947 had inaugurated on the campus and afield a teaching and research program designed to explore cultural repercussions related to the introduction of new technology and scientific ideas in a variety of peasant communities. Among the projects established in connection with this program in anthropology, and sponsored also by the Cornell Department of Far Eastern Studies, were village researches which had been begun in eastern Uttar Pradesh, India, and in the central rice plain of Thailand. The University therefore welcomed Dr. Brant's suggestion that he carry out a community study in Burma, a region which had been united with India administratively and which shared many cultural elements with Thailand.

121

As recounted in the introduction of this report, political and military conditions in Burma in 1949 forced several changes in research plans and eventually made it necessary to retreat to Rangoon, where the present study was finally begun late in that year. However, the choice of a community adjacent to the primary metropolis of Burma in which to carry on the field research admirably fitted the purposes of the larger comparative anthropological program. It has made possible a point by point comparison of the urban influences of Rangoon on this village with influences exerted by Bangkok on the village being studied under this program which is located some twenty miles from the center of the Thai capital. It has also proved possible for Cornell to sponsor the study of a second Burmese village, on the outskirts of Mandalay, in which Mr. John Brohm conducted research during 1952 and 1953.

So little is known of contemporary conditions in the Burmese village that this study, as Dr. Brant suggests, will contribute towards filling a large void. Readers who know Burma will find much in the report with which they are familiar. They will be particularly interested, however, in the valuable case study in Part III of the solution found for the tensions between the Burman villagers and the Indian minority. And they will obtain a picture of the radical changes in behavior which mark an inevitably increasing sector of Burmese rural life. These new behaviors incorporate conflicts between a peasant technology which can hardly be altered for some time and the new ideas and ideals which can only be rapidly enlarged--conflicts for which flight is no solution.

Lauriston Sharp, Director
Southeast Asia Program

Department of Far Eastern Studies
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York
April, 1954

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

V

INTRODUCTION

101 122 This paper is a summary report of field research which I conducted in the village of Tadagale, Insein District, Burma, during the period November, 1949, to April, 1950. The work was made possible by a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, supplemented by an Area Research Training Fellowship granted by the Social Science Research Council. I am indebted to both of these organizations for the support of my work.

114 121 A word seems in order concerning the selection of Tadagale as a community for study. It was my original intention, before I reached Burma and learned in detail of the then prevailing conditions, to do fieldwork among the Burmese of the delta or dry zone, using as a base a single village which would more or less exemplify contemporary Burmese peasant culture. Nothing was more impossible, in view of the internal conditions, and the plan had to be abandoned. After several months of efforts to shift my research to the Shan States, during which time one project had to be abandoned before it actually commenced, and another came to an abrupt halt in its second week -- both because of the spread of the internal disturbances to the areas concerned -- it became clear that the greatest assurance of continuity of research was to be found in the general area near Rangoon. After a brief survey of communities within a few miles radius of the capital, Tadagale was chosen. It appeared most suitable for several reasons, among them accessibility, manageable size, and, owing to its contact with Rangoon, the possibility of studying socio-cultural change.

124 The fieldwork was done by interviewing of informants, by direct observation of events and behavior, and by the compilation of a detailed census concerning household membership, occupations, marital status, religious affiliation, group membership, income, and other matters. With the aid of a fluent, college-educated interpreter fieldwork was carried on daily.

114 121 This paper does not purport in any way to be a complete or definitive study. An approximation to such a report, I am convinced, can result only from fieldwork done under a set of conditions very different from those that were possible for the research here reported. These should include extended continuous residence (minimally one year) in the community by the investigator, and participation by him in community life without self-imposed or assumed separateness or distinction from the people; and a command of the native language adequate to conduct interviews and conversations without the use of interpreters. For Southeast Asia especially, the real fulfillment of such conditions is most difficult, but to the extent that they are met in ethnographic work the material obtained will possess richness and depth. Since, for a variety of reasons, these conditions could not be met in my study of Tadagale, no apology is offered for the inadequacies of this report. It is well, however, in these days of studies of 'cultures from afar' and other short-cut methods of fieldwork, to indicate how we have worked and how our results are thereby affected. Since knowledge of contemporary Burmese village culture is virtually non-existent, a report such as this perhaps may be regarded as a small contribution towards filling a large void.

[127] 114 122 I am much indebted to Miss C. A. Rustom, of Mandalay, my interpreter, whose tact and insight certainly minimized the limitations that are inherent in fieldwork done by means of an interpreter. Dr. Paul F. Cressey of Wheaton College (Massachusetts), who was teaching in Rangoon University at the time of

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

114
122

my fieldwork, gave helpful suggestions and advice.. The greatest thanks are doubtless due the people of Tadagale. At a time when their own problems of living were unusually difficult, they were friendly and cooperative towards one who must, at times, have seemed a quite aimless and overly inquisitive outsider. To Professor Lauriston Sharp of Cornell University I am grateful for making it possible for me to spend part of my time during the spring term of 1951 in the organization of data embodied in this report; and no less appreciative of his forbearance in the face of my unusual tardiness in getting the report written.

Charles S. Brant

Easton, Maryland
January, 1954

Introduction

This is a study of the falling standard of living of a Burmese family who were uprooted by the insurrection from their village home of Pathwe in 1949 and transplanted in a refugee camp in Rangoon. The family consisted of U Myaing - a fisherman aged 47; hes wife Ma Aye Myaing, age 33, Daw Aw Zar, his mother, age 72, and four daughters - Ma Tin Shwe, age 14, Ma Khin Nyein, age 11, Ma Khmi Saw, age 7, and Ma Win Tin, age 5.(1951).

121
[664]
[722]
[592]

An attempt is made to present quantitatively and qualitatively the items used in, and activities of everyday life in the home village as contrasted with the refugee camp. It is hoped this dynamic situation will reveal some of the basic facts of Burmese culture as they pertain to an average family. The bulk of the data was collected under my direction by Ko Sein Tu, Tutor of the Psychology Department, University of Rangoon, from August 1950 to May 1951. Ko Nya Tu, medical student at the University, helped in collecting the health data. Ma Khin Hmway, Assistant in Anthropology at the University, collected some of the more personal data from the ladies of the family. Professor Mohinda Nath, Head of the Department of Biology, University of Rangoon, kindly arranged for the scientific identification of the food items. Part of the data was collectedby the use of a tape recorder portions of which are reproduced verbatim in this report. Miss Mary Watson, Head Stenographer of the Community Project, gave her valuable help in proof reading and typing the stencils for this report.

121
114
126
128

A setting for the better understanding of the facts of the family is given in sections on general Burmese Concepts which follow the family data. This was provided by Ko Maung Than, student at the University, who worked as my assistant from August through November 1951.

128

I am indebted to Dr. Htin Aung, Professor of Anthropology and Rector of the University of Rangoon for his constant support and encouragement in this study. I carried out the study as a Fulbright grantee in Anthropology attached to the United States Educational Foundation in Rangoon, to whose officers I am grateful

122

122 for their cooperation in making the study possible.

128 The material is presented here as a collection of field notes from which certain preliminary observations and conclusions may be drawn. A final intensive analysis with the advantages of comparative data must await adequate reference facilities not available at the present time. The notes form part of a collection of Anthropological data on Burmese culture and society being amassed by the Burma Community Research Project under the sponsorship of the Union of Burma Government Mass Education Council.

128 Notes on Presentation:

1. Burmese words are captilized.

2. The spelling of the Burmese words is not truly "phonetical" (which would necessitate the use of an international phonetic alphabet) but is the way the Burmese ordinarily convert their sounds into English spelling. The Burmese phonetic system and true sounds of many of the words given here may be had in William S. Cornyn "Spoken Burmese" 1945-46 (Holt).

3. Wherever meaningful the actual translatick of words follow in parenthesis.

4. Space and time measurements and costs are usually given as recorded from the informant in Burmese terms. The glossary gives the western equivalents.

[436] 5. The units of money used are rupees (21 American cents) and annas (1/16th of the rupee) written as in this example: Rs. (rupees) 10/8 with the diagnal line separating the rupees from the annas. When no annas - a dash (-) is used.

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

BURMESE KINSHIP AND THE LIFE CYCLE: AN OUTLINE

CHARLES S. BRANT AND MI MI KHAING[1]

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

121 OUR PURPOSE is to present and analyze some basic features of Burmese social organization. So numerous, elaborate and varied are the details of belief and behavior pertaining to kinship and the life cycle that to present them in a manner approximating completeness would be beyond the scope of a brief paper.

121 184 The material that follows, concerning the kinship system, patterns of customary behavior between various pairs of relatives, and the life cycle, is to be understood as applying to contemporary Burmese culture as it is manifested in the villages of Lower Burma. In and near the urban centers, where the secularizing [177] influences of the West have permeated indigenous custom to a greater extent, practice is likely to diverge from ideal patterns much more than in the small, homogeneous village communities. Our concern here is with the social life of the ordinary peasantry of Lower Burma. It is hoped that these data may contribute in some measure to the very scant and fragmentary knowledge of modern Burmese culture.[2]

THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

601 The basic consanguineal and affinal kinship terminologies are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The kinship terms, corresponding to the numbers shown on the diagrams, are as follows:[3]

1. ʔaméi Mother.
2. ʔaphéi Father.
3. pharjî Parent's elder brother; parent's elder sister's husband.

1 The first-named author of this paper expresses his thanks to the Board of Foreign Scholarships for appointment to a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, making possible the field research period 1949-50 in Burma, and to the Social Science Research Council for supplementary support in the form of a World Area Research Training fellowship.

2 The interested reader is referred to Shway Yoe's *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, first published in 1882 and most recently reprinted by Macmillan & Co., London, for the only fully-rounded account of Burmese culture. See also Mi Mi Khaing, *Burmese Family* (London, 1946) for a culturally insightful narrative of life in a Burmese family.

3 For assistance in transcription of the kinship terms thanks are due Professor W. S. Cornyn. The symbols follow the system employed in his *Outline of Burmese Grammar* (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1944).

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

church has been connected with a consciousness of the paradoxical content of faith."[3] 121

My inquiry, thus begun in Burma, was continued in Ceylon and India and concluded in New York. It has been pursued, with various interruptions, for some twenty years. In listing my acknowledgments, I am therefore aware that I may omit some who have given me generous help, more especially in the earlier days in Burma, since some of the notes relating to this period were lost during the Japanese invasion. I must also make it clear that acknowledgment of help given does not imply approval of the views expressed in this work. I am fully aware that some of these views are debatable. Any Western writer, knowing how much confusion has been caused by the temptation to read Western preconceptions into Buddhist thought, is bound to feel hesitant in expressing his own conclusions. He looks for the day when other scholars from the Orient such as the late U Shwe Zan Aung, themselves acquainted with our Western idiom, will assist our interpretation. Meantime he can only hope that his own efforts will promote that better understanding between East and West which may yield new insights in the universal search for truth. 122

While in India, I was invited to Union Theological Seminary, New York, and I am most grateful to the President, Dr Henry P. Van Dusen and the members of the Seminary for this invitation and the subsequent hospitality and facilities received there which enabled the preparation of this work as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy awarded by Columbia University. I am especially indebted to the following for their generous encouragement and assistance: Dr Horace L. Friess, Dr Frederick C. Grant, Dr Arthur Jeffery, Dr Richard Kroner, Dr August Karl Reischauer, Dr David E. Roberts and Dr Herbert W. Schneider.

In his devoted work for the Missionary Research Library, the late Mr Charles H. Fahs collected books and documents on Burma not available elsewhere, and I am glad to have this opportunity of acknowledging his most courteous assistance. I am similarly very grateful for the help I received from Dr Lucy W. Markley and the staff of the Union Seminary Library; Dr Marguerite Block of the Low Memorial Library, Columbia University; and from the librarians of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.

To the Rev. R. F. Spear, American Methodist Mission, Pegu, Burma, I am very grateful for permission to read and quote from his MS thesis, 114

[3] G. Ljunggren, "The Paradox as a Theological Expression," *Swedish Theological Quarterly Review*, (1928), p. 333, quoted by Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (trans. by Wahlstrom and Arden, 1948), Part I, p. 101.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

114 *The Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma*, and to the Northwestern University and Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois, for allowing me to consult this MS.

122 Correspondents who have been kind enough to answer my questions on specific issues include the late Professor J. A. Stewart of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Dr William Stede, co-editor of the Pali English Dictionary; U Lu Pe Win, Mandalay, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Burma; Dr A. D. Sagayam, Maymyo, Upper Burma; and the Rev. H. Harwood, American Methodist Mission, Rangoon, Burma.

For the co-operation and very valuable help given me by my wife I can never be too grateful, and in the final preparation of this work for the Press I am greatly indebted to Professor J. Duchesne-Guillemin of Liége University and to my colleague at McGill, Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

To the Humanities Research Council of Canada and to the McGill University Research Fund Committee I am most grateful for financial grants which have made this publication possible.

McGill University
Montreal
May 24, 1950.

ROBERT LAWSON SLATER

[p. ix blank]